

January 7, 2019

MEMORANDUM TO: All OPS Staff

SUBJECT: Looking ahead to 2019

I want to begin by wishing everyone a happy New Year. I hope that everybody across the public service was able to take some time over the holidays to relax and recharge with your family and friends.

I know 2018 was a busy year across the entire public service. Any time there is a change in government there are new demands placed on each of you to ensure a seamless transition and encourage effective policy making without disrupting any of the government's core services.

On behalf of my colleagues across the entire cabinet I want to thank everyone for quickly bringing yourself up to speed on our Plan for the People and providing consistent, high-quality, non-partisan professional advice as we implemented our ambitious plan. With your support, we have been moving forward at a lightning pace. Our shared achievements over the past six months have been impressive, and people across Ontario have taken note of the tremendous results we are delivering. Working together, we have accomplished a lot — and I truly believe that so much of the credit belongs to our hard-working OPS staff, especially our frontline workers.

Our government came into office with a clear blueprint to return more money to the taxpayer's pockets, clean up Ontario's hydro mess, create jobs and make Ontario open for business, improve accountability and trust in how government operates, and take steps to end hallway health care. Today I am proud to say we have made significant progress across all of these priorities.

We have a lot of work ahead of us in 2019. I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight three of the emerging priorities that we will focus on in the year ahead.

Jobs: In 2018 we made significant progress in making Ontario open for business and creating a pro-jobs environment in our province. In particular, by eliminating the cap-and-trade carbon tax, allowing businesses to write off job-creating capital investments faster and embracing pro-jobs labour reforms in the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, we have already taken important steps to make it easier to find or create good paying jobs in Ontario. And certainly, the positive job-creation numbers we saw in December should be encouraging to us all. We know opportunities are out there. Indeed, whenever I travel the province I hear from prospective employers who are desperate to bring on more workers. Ontario is blessed with the greatest people, a skilled workforce and abundant natural resources; with your support we will turn these advantages into prosperity and opportunity that every Ontarian will share.

Under the leadership of Minister Todd Smith and with your support, our government will be redoubling our efforts to connect more workers to good paying jobs while encouraging job creation, investment and trade both inside and outside of Canada.

Balancing the Budget in a Responsible Manner: Ontario's Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry has clearly laid out the challenge in front of us. Ontario inherited a \$15 billion deficit. If we allow this deficit to continue to fester and grow, it will end up imperiling our hospitals, schools and other public services. We cannot allow this to happen.

The good news is that, with your support and under the leadership of ministers Vic Fedeli and Peter Bethlenfalvy, our government has already taken a number of measures to restore fiscal discipline to Ontario. Minister Fedeli's Fall Economic Statement revealed that we had already found \$500 million in savings in under six months. That is a good start.

Your continued efforts will be critical to achieving fiscal balance and restoring public confidence in our province's finances. I was particularly pleased to learn that more than 1,000 members of the public service are certified Six Sigma black belts and will be continuing to look to you to provide leadership as we work to improve the functioning of government. I believe that the best ideas come from you. Our frontline workers know better than anyone how we can find savings and do things more efficiently. Thanks in particular to all of you who participated in the Big Bold Ideas Challenge. While the Challenge has now closed, I encourage anyone who still has an idea to email it to BigBoldIdeas@ontario.ca.

Delivering Better Health Care: One of the reasons we are taking Ontario's fiscal challenges so seriously is to protect our health care system. The demographic challenges of Ontario's aging population are already severe and will continue to grow.

Our government will continue to ensure necessary funding for world-class health care in Ontario, but this issue must be about more than money. It will also be about embracing change and innovation, deploying technology more effectively, and committing to new models of collaboration and patient care. We are working with our incredible nurses, doctors and frontline health care professionals to do it. Because no one understands the challenges and opportunities better than those serving on the frontlines day in and day out.

The good news is our Deputy Premier, Minister Christine Elliott, has already laid the foundation for building the health care system of the future, which will include historic investments in areas such as long-term care for our seniors and improved mental health and addiction supports for Ontario families.

On a final note, I want to close with a word of thanks to our retiring Secretary of the Cabinet, Steve Orsini, for his distinguished 27 years of service to the people of Ontario.

Steve played a key role in ensuring our government could set such an ambitious pace throughout 2018 and I will certainly miss his counsel, strategic insights and understanding of how the Government of Ontario touches people's lives.

I want you to know that a thorough search for Steve's successor is already underway and we will share an update with you shortly. For now, I hope everyone will join me in expressing my gratitude to Steve for his many contributions to the government and in wishing him and his family well in the future.

Thank you, once again, for your continued service to our province. On behalf of my cabinet colleagues and all of our staff, we look forward to continuing to work with you in the year ahead.

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